plays that abound have been one of the chief methods of instructing the populace in the story of their nation's past. Many of the plays written during the Yuan have survived until our own day.

The novel, too, emerged suddenly into prominence. One of the most famous of the historical romances of China, the *San Kuo Chih Yen* /, or "'Romance of the Three Kingdoms," portraying some of the stirring events of the period which succeeded the downfall of the Han, seems to date from the Yuan —although it is very probable that only the crude original was written in that period and that it underwent many revisions before, in the sixteenth century, it appeared in its finished form.

In popular songs there were also innovations.

Both the drama and the novel were usually written in a style which approached the vernacular and helped toward a popularization of literature.

Why they should now first have flourished is not entirely certain. One conjecture has it that it was because of outside influences; another surmise is that scholars, cut off from holding office, and, through the discontinuance of civil service examinations, denied the usual method of promotion, turned their energies into these channels. Whatever the causes, the fact is clear.

CHINESE INFLUENCE ON FOREIGN PEOPLES

While, thanks to the partial unity brought to so much of Asia by Mongol rule, foreigners were having an influence upon Chinese culture, China, in turn, was not without its effect upon other peoples. Commerce spread the use of Chinese silks and porcelains, and these left their stamp upon the fabrics and the designs of Central and Western Asia. The Chinese impress is seen, too, upon the painting of miniatures in Central Asia. It is just possible,

moreover, that knowledge of that art of printing which had reached so high a stage of development in China under the Sung may have penetrated to the West in Mongol times and have had some share in the preparation for the revolutionary growth of the press in Europe a century or so after the downfall of the Yuan.

CONCLUSION

The Mongol period, then, was marked by distinct changes in Chinese life and was the break—or the transition—between the brilliant but over-refined culture of the Sung and the prosperous